



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 15, 2021

TO: The Balboa Park Committee
Agenda of January 20, 2021

FROM: Andy Field, Parks and Recreation Department Director

SUBJECT: Balboa Park: Framework for the Future

THIS IS AN INFORMATIONAL ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE.

I. BACKGROUND

The goal of the Framework for the Future initiative is to identify strategic priorities for future investment in Balboa Park, inform future decision making and provide better alignment between available resources and experiences residents want to enjoy when they visit the park.

In recent years, many studies have been undertaken and innovative recommendations proposed in an effort to set Balboa Park on a sustainable future providing amenities and attractions for current residents and future generations to enjoy. The current Balboa Park Master Plan was adopted in 1989 and most recently updated in 2012 with a vision “to nurture and enhance the recreational and passive resources of the park to meet the needs of the region and surrounding community, while respecting its physical, cultural and historical environment.” Two precise plans for various areas of the park were adopted as well. These documents outline the planned improvements and investments to Balboa Park (Attachment 1).

In 2008, the Trust for Public Land produced a report entitled “The Soul of San Diego: Keeping Balboa Park Magnificent in Its Second Century” (Attachment 2). This report raised concerns about the financial support and governance of Balboa Park. This Committee responded to the report with its own report “The Future of Balboa Park: Funding, Management and Governance” (Attachment 3). As both reports address core concerns with the operations and future care of Balboa Park, they will be foundational to the Framework for the Future initiative.

At the request of the Balboa Park Committee, a community input workshop was conducted at their meeting of February 2, 2020. The question posed to over 300 participants was - What must be addressed in Balboa Park? The key themes that emerged were:

- Maintenance and Infrastructure

- Sustainable Funding
- Parking, Access, Circulation and Mobility
- Programming, Culture and Amenities
- Security and Safety
- Project Prioritization, Planning and Review
- Governance

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, follow-up action was delayed until the September 2020 Balboa Park Committee meeting. At that time, Department staff gathered additional input to refine the identified themes via an in-meeting polling process. The committee requested additional outreach to ensure representative input, specifically from youth and a diverse swath of City residents, to hear from people who use the park regularly as well as those who visit less frequently.

Informed by the themes that emerged from the committee workshop and the data collected from the polling and survey, this report summarizes work underway and proposed next steps for your consideration.

II. WORK UNDERWAY

Initiative #1 – Community Outreach and Engagement

Goal: Engage diverse communities across San Diego to ascertain their hopes and priorities for Balboa Park.

Deliverable: Summarized input from a large swath of San Diego residents regarding priorities for the park with action items informed by Outreach Process conducted in February 2020, September 2020 and October–November 2020.

Components:

1. Community engagement at the February 2020 and September 2020 Balboa Park Committee meetings
 - a. Determine what must be addressed in Balboa Park
 - i. Over 300 participants provided written responses to this question in February
 - b. Refine the responses into themes
 - i. Over 150 participants provided responses via in-meeting polling in September
2. Ongoing updates to Committee by City staff and continuing engagement with park stakeholders and the public

3. Outreach and survey efforts – approximately 1,600 people have responded to online survey
 - a. Briefed on Outreach Effort – Oct. 1, 2020 – Balboa Park Committee Meeting
 - b. Began broad and targeted external outreach effort – Oct. 26, 2020
 - i. Survey outreach conducted via in-person meetings and email distribution requests and specifically targeted youth and non-English speaking participants. See extensive outreach list (Attachment 5).
 - ii. Survey distributed in Spanish and English
 - c. Briefed on Outreach Effort – Nov. 5, 2020 – Balboa Park Committee Meeting
 - d. Outreach Effort Concluded – Dec. 4, 2020
4. Data made available via report and proposed next steps presentation – January 2021– Balboa Park Committee Meeting (Attachment 4).

Cost and Capacity:

This effort was undertaken by Parks and Recreation Department staff with the assistance of the Communications Department.

Prior Reports to Reference/Incorporate:

Balboa Park: User Survey Report, 2007, Morey Group, part of the Soul of San Diego Report

III. WORK PENDING

Initiative #2 Prioritization Framework

Goal: A framework to guide future investment in Balboa Park.

Deliverable: An overall framework that explains and results in a prioritization process to be used to assign scarce resources to the most impactful projects for Balboa Park.

Components:

1. Develop a scoring system for assessing and prioritizing projects
 - a. Distill key priorities, project criteria, strategy screens from prior reports, data from community outreach and stakeholders. Examples: seek to prioritize projects that increase safety and security, address homeless impact, activate a space, promote a certain recreation use, protect historical significance, funding identified, collaborative effort, etc.
 - b. Propose a project priority scoring system
2. Collate and categorize all projects

- a. Repair and upgrade of existing buildings and amenities (i.e., restrooms, roofs, building systems, playgrounds, parking lots, plazas, etc.)
- b. Identify and prioritize projects in the Balboa Park Master Plan, Precise Plans (i.e., gardens, parking structure) and general development plans
- c. Define projects that create new uses, areas and/or buildings
3. Update Facilities Assessment/Building Condition Report (2016) (Attachment 6)
 - a. Update and document cost projections
 - b. Identify urgent needs
4. Incorporate engagement of the public and park stakeholders
 - a. Document how City elected officials and department staff, park stakeholders and the public meaningfully engage in the prioritization process
5. Prepare a comprehensive framework detailing the project prioritization process for future investment in the park

Cost and Capacity:

Parks and Recreation Department will hire a consultant for this deliverable. Estimated cost is \$75,000.

Prior Reports and Current Policies to Reference/Incorporate:

The Soul of San Diego: Keeping Balboa Park Magnificent in Its Second Century, 2008, The Center for City Park Excellence of the Trust for Public Land

City of San Diego Balboa Park Facilities Condition Assessment, Leased & City-Occupied, Fiscal Year 2016

Balboa Park: Land Use, Circulation, and Parking Study, 2004, Jones & Jones (Attachment 7)

Park Amenity Assessment: Balboa Park Cumulative report (Kitchell, June 2016) (Attachment 8)

Council Policy 800-14 – Prioritizing Capital Improvement Program Projects (Attachment 10)

Council Policy 600-33 – Public Notification and Input for City-wide Park Development Projects (Attachment 11)

Initiative #3 Mobility/Access/Circulation/Parking/ADA Recommendations

Goal: Innovative solutions to current mobility challenges in the park.

Deliverable: A series of summary studies with recommendations to increase the ease of access, safety and mobility for all visitors. The disparate views regarding parking and circulation will be addressed with forward thinking solutions.

Components (short term to long term):

1. Traffic Flow Study – one-way circulation changes, appropriate signage and speed limits
2. Accessibility Study – pinch points, walkability, drop off points and close in parking, pedestrian circulation, sidewalks, crosswalks and walkways
3. Focused Circulation Study – circulators, parking, parking structures, connections from Central Mesa and Inspiration Point to the West Mesa and/or East Mesa and tram path and schedule
4. ADA Accessibility Study – increasing access for residents and visitors with disabilities including parking, drop off points, ramps, facilities and other amenities with barriers to access
5. Comprehensive Balboa Park Multimodal Circulation Study – including surrounding communities, general modeling for events (large, small, permitting for special events) and transit accessibility

Cost and Capacity:

The Parks and Recreation Department will engage the Mobility Department, the Planning Department, the Office of ADA Compliance and Accessibility and an as-needed consultant to complete these studies. Cost estimate is to be determined.

Prior Reports to Reference/Incorporate:

Balboa Park: Land Use, Circulation and Parking Study, 2004, Jones & Jones

Parking Management Action Plan for Balboa Park, 2006, Tilghman Group and Civitas Inc. (Attachment 9)

Initiative #4 Governance Models and Sustainable Funding Structures – Peer City Analysis

Goal: Understand the range of best practice models utilized by peer cities for governance and sustainable funding of their large urban core parks.

Deliverable: A summary of the models used by exemplary cities for governance and sustainable funding with recommendations for San Diego.

Components:

1. Develop key questions for peer cities focused on
 - a. Sustainable funding structures – property tax, bonds, district, etc.

- b. Governance structures – multi-stakeholder, public-private partnerships, operating agreements, etc.
2. Review resources for prior benchmarking work
 - a. Soul of San Diego Report
 - b. National Recreation and Parks Association
 - c. California Parks and Recreation Society
 - d. City Parks Alliance
3. Conduct interviews and gather materials from peer cities with large, marquee urban park that utilize public-private partnerships and/or are solely city managed
 - a. Central Park Conservancy (New York)
 - b. Piedmont Park Conservancy (Atlanta)
 - c. Hermann Park Conservancy (Houston)
 - d. Emerald Necklace Conservancy (Boston)
 - e. Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
 - f. Forest Park Forever (St. Louis)
 - g. Fairmount Park Conservancy (Philadelphia)
 - h. Griffith Park (Los Angeles)
 - i. Volunteer Park (Seattle)
 - j. Stapleton Airport, Central Park (Denver)
 - k. Maggie Daley Park, Exposition Park (Chicago)
 - l. Other parks suggested by the Balboa Park Committee
4. Analyze San Diego's current model, determine the advantages and disadvantages vis-a-vis the best practices and provide detailed recommendations for implementation.
5. Examine sustainable funding options deployed at various municipal park systems and determine the method of governance. Based on the results of the benchmarking work, a separate initiative may emerge that specifically addresses appropriate funding mechanisms and strategies for Balboa Park.

Cost and Capacity:

The Parks and Recreation Department will lead this effort and contract with consultants as needed. Estimated cost \$50,000 but may vary depending on extent of benchmarking conducted.

Prior Reports to Reference/Incorporate:

Options and Opportunities: New Management Paradigms for Balboa Park, 2007, The Keaton Institute for Public Finance and Infrastructure Policy, USC

IV. CONCLUSION

Taken together, these initiatives will help direct investment and revitalization planning toward what the public wants to see as part of Balboa Park's future. Balboa Park exists today as the result of cooperative partnerships. Respecting and building on past good work, the park will continue to be a welcoming place that recognizes and celebrates San Diego's rich diversity for generations to come.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Field". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being the most prominent.

Andy Field
Director
Parks and Recreation Department

Attachments (accessible by links):

1. Balboa Park Master Plan and Precise Plans:
 - a. Balboa Park Master Plan and Amendments
 - i. [Balboa Park Master Plan](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan_o.pdf) (1989):
https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan_o.pdf
 - ii. [Balboa Park Master Plan Amendment](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan-r-289537_1997_amendment.pdf) (1997):
https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan-r-289537_1997_amendment.pdf
 - iii. [Balboa Park Master Plan Amendment](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan-r-290039-1_1998_amendment.pdf) (1998):
https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan-r-290039-1_1998_amendment.pdf
 - iv. [Balboa Park Master Plan Amendment](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan-r-299085_2003_amendment_o.pdf) (2003):
https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan-r-299085_2003_amendment_o.pdf
 - v. [Balboa Park Master Plan Amendment](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan-r-299666_2004_amendment.pdf) (2004):
https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan-r-299666_2004_amendment.pdf
 - vi. [Balboa Park Master Plan Amendment](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan-rr-307555-1_2012_amendment.pdf) (2012):
https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpmasterplan-rr-307555-1_2012_amendment.pdf

- b. Central Mesa Precise Plan (1992):
<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/parkplanning/bpcmpp>
- c. East Mesa Precise Plan (1993):
<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/park-and-recreation/pdf/parkdesign/bpempp.pdf>
2. Soul of San Diego Report (Trust for Public Lands, 2008)
<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/soulsd.pdf>
3. The Future of Balboa Park: Funding, Management and Governance (Balboa Park Committee, 2008) <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpcresp.pdf>
4. Polling and Survey Results
Polling conducted during meeting of Balboa Park Committee Sept. 3, 2020
Outreach Survey (Spanish) results: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-775GFCO2/>
Outreach Survey (English) results: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-JXWDX3V2/>
5. Survey Outreach
 - a. Recreation Center Users
 - b. City-wide Advisory Groups and Specific Recreation Advisory Groups
 - c. Park Equity Stakeholder Working Group
 - d. Community Planning Groups
 - e. Urban Sustainability Stakeholder Groups
 - f. Balboa Park Institutions with existing youth programming
 - i. Balboa Park Cultural Partnership
 - ii. Balboa Park Education Council
 - iii. Civic Youth Ballet
 - iv. Fleet Science Center
 - v. Japanese Friendship Garden
 - vi. Museum of Us
 - vii. San Diego Air and Space Museum
 - viii. San Diego Automotive Museum (SDAM)
 - ix. San Diego Junior Theatre
 - x. San Diego Model Railroad Museum
 - xi. The Old Globe
 - xii. World Beat Center
 - xiii. Youth Performing Arts
 - g. North Park Little League
 - h. University City Community Group
 - i. Tennis Group at Morley Field
 - j. North Park AYSO
 - k. Balboa Park Online Collaborative
 - l. San Diego Unified School District
 - m. Boy Scouts
 - n. Mission Bay Committee
 - o. Mission Bay Lessee Association
 - p. Downtown San Diego Partnership

- q. San Diego Zoo
 - r. Girl Scouts
 - s. Civic Dance Arts
 - t. San Diego Public Library
 - u. Social Media – Facebook, Instagram, Website, Next Door
 - v. Office of Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer (former)
 - w. Councilmembers:
 - District 1 – Barbara Bry (former)
 - District 2 – Jennifer Campbell
 - District 3 – Chris Ward (former)
 - District 4 – Monica Montgomery–Steppe
 - District 5 – Mark Kersey (former)
 - District 6 – Chris Cate
 - District 7 – Scott Sherman (former)
 - District 8 – Vivian Moreno
 - District 9 – Georgette Gomez (former)
6. Facilities and Park Condition Assessment Report (Alpha and Kitchell, 2016)
<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/bpgfassess.pdf>
 7. Land Use, Parking and Circulation Study (Jones and Jones, 2004)
<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/park-and-recreation/pdf/parkdesign/bplucp.pdf>
 8. Park Amenity Assessment: Balboa Park Cumulative report (Kitchell, June 2016)
https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/prbr170316_item_201b.pdf
 9. Parking Management Action Plan for Balboa Park (Tilghman Group and Civitas Inc. 2006) <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/park-and-recreation/pdf/parkdesign/bpparkingmanagementplan.pdf>
 10. Council Policy 800-14 – Prioritizing Capital Improvement Program Projects
https://docs.sandiego.gov/councilpolicies/cpd_800-14.pdf
 11. Council Policy 600-33 – Public Notification and Input for City-wide Park Development Projects - https://docs.sandiego.gov/councilpolicies/cpd_600-33.pdf